

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

For

METHOD AND SYSTEM TO GENERATE A LISTING IN A NETWORK-BASED
COMMERCE SYSTEM

Inventors:

Steve Grove
Larry Cornett

Prepared by:
Blakely, Sokoloff, Taylor & Zafman
12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025
(408) 947-8200

Attorney's Docket No. 3801P102

"Express Mail" mailing label number: EV301831643US

Date of Deposit: August 25, 2003

I hereby certify that I am causing this paper or fee to be deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service on the date indicated above and that this paper or fee has been addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D. C. 20231

Sarah M. Montgomery

(Typed or printed name of person mailing paper or fee)

(Signature of person mailing paper or fee)

(Date signed) 8/25/03

METHOD AND SYSTEM TO GENERATE A LISTING IN A NETWORK-BASED COMMERCE SYSTEM

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S. provisional application serial no. 60/437,199, filed December 31, 2002.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to the field of electronic commerce, and more specifically to a method and system to generate a listing in a network-based commerce system.

BACKGROUND

[0003] More and more Internet users are realizing the ease and convenience of buying and selling online via a network-based commerce system. Certain such commerce systems are focused on person-to-person trading, and collectors, hobbyists, small dealers, unique listing seekers, bargain hunters, and other consumers, are able to buy and sell millions of listings at various online shopping sites. Such systems also support business-to-person and business-to-business commerce.

[0004] The success of a networked-based commerce system may depend upon its ability to provide a user-friendly environment in which buyers and sellers can conduct business efficiently. Current network-based commerce systems have certain limitations in the manner in which a user can post a listing on such systems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method and system of generating a listing in a network-based commerce system. The method includes receiving listing identification data from a user, and retrieving listing data associated with the listing based on the listing identification data. Thereafter, a listing is generated that is at least partially based on the listing data and posted on the network-based commerce system. In one embodiment, the user may edit the listing data prior to posting the listing. The network-based commerce system may include a database of listing data associated with at least one of movies, music, games, books and motor vehicles. In one embodiment, a plurality of check boxes is provided each of which are associated with an attribute of the listing and the method automatically, without human intervention, checks attributes based on the listing data.

[0006] Other features of the present invention will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The invention is now described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings in which like reference numerals are used to indicate the same or similar features, unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 1 shows a schematic block diagram of an exemplary network-based commerce system, in accordance with the invention.

Figure 2 shows exemplary tables of a database of the system of Figure 1.

Figure 3 shows an exemplary listings table of the database of Figure 2.

Figure 4 shows a schematic flow diagram of a method, in accordance with the invention, to generate a listing in a network-based commerce system.

Figure 5 shows a schematic flow diagram of a further method, in accordance with the invention, to generate a listing.

Figure 6 shows a schematic flow diagram of a method, in accordance with the invention, to generate a listing using a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and vehicle attributes.

Figure 7 shows a schematic functional diagram of a method, in accordance with the invention, to post listings in a network-based commerce system.

Figure 8 shows an exemplary user interface generated by the method of Figure 6.

Figure 9 shows an exemplary user interface for selecting one of a plurality of listings corresponding with a VIN.

Figure 10 shows an exemplary user interface including a plurality of check boxes for generating the listing.

Figure 11 shows an exemplary user interface wherein a title for the listing is generated in an automated fashion from the VIN.

Figure 12 shows portion of an exemplary user interface for previewing the listing prior to posting it on the network-based commerce system.

Figure 13 shows an exemplary user interface of a proposed listing presented to a user.

Figures 14 to 16 show exemplary user interfaces for editing a posted listing after bids for the listing have been posted.

Figure 17 shows a schematic block diagram of a further system, in accordance with the invention, to generate a listing in a network-based commerce system.

Figure 18 shows an exemplary computer system for executing a set of instructions to carry out any one or more of the methods described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] A method and system automatically to generate listings in a network-based commerce system based on reference listing data is described. In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. It will be evident, however, to one skilled in the art that the invention may be practiced without these specific details.

[0009] For the purposes of the present specification, the term "listing" or "item" may refer to any description, identifier, representation or information pertaining to a listing, service, offering or request that is stored within a network-based commerce system. As such, a listing may be an auction or fixed-price offering (e.g., products such as goods and/or services), an advertisement, or a request for a listing or service.

Transaction Facility

[00010] Figure 1 is block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based commerce system 10. While an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is described within the context of the network-based commerce system 10, the invention will find application in many different types of computer-based, and network-based, facilities (commerce, transaction or otherwise).

[00011] The network-based commerce system 10 includes one or more of a number of types of front-end servers that each includes at least one Dynamic Link Library (DLL) to provide selected functionality. The system 10 includes page servers 12 that deliver web pages (e.g., mark-up language documents), picture servers 14 that dynamically deliver images to be displayed within Web pages, listing servers 16 that facilitate category-based browsing of listings, search servers 18 that handle search requests to the system 10 and facilitate keyword-based browsing of listings, and ISAPI servers 20 that provide an intelligent

interface to a back-end of the system 10. The system 10 also includes e-mail servers 22 that provide, *inter alia*, automated e-mail communications to users of the network-based commerce system 10. In one embodiment, one or more administrative application functions 24 facilitate monitoring, maintaining, and managing the system 10. One or more API servers 26 may provide a set of API functions for querying and writing to the network-based commerce system 10. APIs may be called through the HTTP transport protocol. In one embodiment, information is sent and received using a standard XML data format. Applications utilized to interact (e.g., upload transaction listings, review transaction listings, manage transaction listings, etc.) with the network-based commerce system 10 may be designed to use the APIs. Such applications may be in an HTML form or be a CGI program written in C++, Perl, Pascal, or any other programming language.

[00012] The page servers 12, API servers 26, picture servers 14, ISAPI servers 20, search servers 18, e-mail servers 22 and a database engine server 28 may individually, or in combination, act as a communication engine to facilitate communications between, for example, a client machine 30 and the network-based commerce system 10; act as a transaction engine to facilitate transactions between, for example, the client machine 30 and the network-based commerce system 10; and act as a display engine to facilitate the display of listings on, for example, the client machine 30.

[00013] The back-end servers may include the database engine server 28, a search index server 32 and a credit card database server 34, each of which maintains and facilitates access to a respective database.

[00014] In one embodiment, the network-based commerce system 10 is accessed by a client program, such as for example a browser 36 (e.g., the Internet Explorer distributed by Microsoft Corp. of Redmond, Washington) that executes on the client machine 30 and accesses the network-based commerce system 10

via a network such as, for example, the Internet 38. Other examples of networks that a client may utilize to access the network-based commerce system 10 include a wide area network (WAN), a local area network (LAN), a wireless network (e.g., a cellular network), the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) network, or the like. The client program that executes on the client machine 30 may also communicate with the network-based commerce system 10 via the API servers 26.

Database Structure

[00015] Figure 2 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database 40, maintained by and accessed via the database engine server 28, which at least partially implements and supports the network-based commerce system 10. In one embodiment, the database engine server 28 may maintain two databases, a first database being maintained for listing (or offering) information that is not included within a virtual “store”, and a second database for listing (or offering) information that is presented via a virtual “store” supported by the network-based commerce system 10.

[00016] The database 40 may, in one embodiment, be implemented as a relational database, and includes a number of tables having entries, or records, that are linked by indices and keys. In an alternative embodiment, the database 40 may be implemented as collection of objects in an object-oriented database.

[00017] The database 40 (see Figure 2) includes a user table 42 that contains a record for each user of the network-based commerce system 10. A user may operate as a seller, a buyer, or both, when utilizing the network-based commerce system 10. The database 40 also includes listings tables 44 that may be linked to the user table 42. The listings tables 44 may include a seller listings table 46 and a bidder listings table 48. A user record in the user table 42 may be linked to multiple listings that are being, or have been, listed or offered for sale via the network-based commerce system 10. In one embodiment, a link indicates

whether the user is a seller or a bidder (or buyer) with respect to listings for which records exist within the listings tables 44. An exemplary listings table is also shown in Figure 3.

[00018] The database 40 also includes one or more divisions in the form of categories provided in category tables 50. Each record within the category table 50 may describe a respective category. In one embodiment, listings provided by the system 10 are arranged in the categories. These categories may be navigable by a user of the network-based commerce system 10 to locate listings in specific categories. Thus, categories provide a mechanism to locate listings that may be browsed. In addition or instead, an alphanumeric search mechanism may be provided by the search servers 20 to allow a user to search for specific listings using search terms or phrases. In one embodiment, the category table 50 describes multiple, hierarchical category data structures, and includes multiple category records, each of which describes the context of a particular category within the multiple hierarchical category structures. For example, the category table 50 may describe a number of real, or actual, categories to which listing records, within the listings tables 44, may be linked.

[00019] The database 40 also includes one or more attributes tables 52. Each record within the attributes table 52 describes a respective attribute associated with a listing. In one embodiment, the attributes table 52 describes multiple, hierarchical attribute data structures, and includes multiple attribute records, each of which describes the context of a particular attribute within the multiple hierarchical attribute structures. For example, the attributes table 52 may describe a number of real, or actual, attributes to which listing records, within the listings tables 44, may be linked. Also, the attributes table 52 may describe a number of real, or actual, attributes to which categories, within the category table 50, may be linked.

[00020] The database 40 may also include a note table 54 populated with note records that may be linked to one or more listing records within the listings tables 44 and/or to one or more user records within the user table 42. Each note record within the note table 54 may include, *inter alia*, a comment, description, history or other information pertaining to a listing being offered via the network-based commerce system 10, to a user of the network-based commerce system 10. The database 40 may also include a targeted site table 56 populated with targeted site records that may be linked to one or more listing records within the listings tables 44 and/or to one or more user records within the user table 42.

[00021] A number of other exemplary tables may also be linked to the user table 42, namely a user past aliases table 58, a feedback table 60, a feedback details table 62, a bids table 64, an accounts table 66, and an account balances table 68. In one embodiment, the database 40 also includes a batch table 70, a batch listings table 72, and a listings wait table 74.

[00022] It will be appreciated that the success of a seller in, for example, selling a listing may be dependent upon the listing information provided when the listing is posted to the network-based commerce system.

Generating a Listing

[00023] Referring in particular to Figure 4, reference numeral 100 generally indicates a method, in accordance with the invention, of generating a listing in the exemplary network-based commerce system 10. In one embodiment, the method 100 automatically populates fields (e.g., includes listing information) of a listing submitted to the network-based commerce system 10 by a user. Although the method 100 may be used to post listings for any type of listing (e.g., products including goods and/or services, advertisements, and so on) its application in posting listings for the sale of motor vehicles in an auction based commerce system is described herein by way of example.

[00024] As shown at Block 102, the method 100, broadly, identifies reference data associated with the proposed listing and, thereafter, retrieves the reference listing data for the proposed listing from a reference data store and then, in an automated fashion, generates listing data for the proposed listing (see block 104) based on the reference listing data. As will be described in more detail below, the method 100 then presents the proposed listing to the user and allows the user to modify (e.g., edit) the data or information in the proposed listing (see block 106). In one embodiment, the method 100 pre-populates fields of a web page with appropriate data that has been retrieved and then allows the user to modify the data as required. Once the proposed listing has been finalized (and/or accepted) by the user, it may then be posted on the network-based commerce system 10 as shown at block 108.

[00025] When the method 100 is applied to listings in the form of motor vehicles (including motorcycles and the like) an identifier such as a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) may be used to identify the appropriate reference data or information associated with the listing (see block 102). Thus, key data associated with the particular listing (e.g., the vehicle) is provided to the user wishing to list the vehicle in an automated fashion. Accordingly, in one embodiment, a user posting a listing is not confronted with the dilemma as to what information to enter when listing (e.g., selling a car) via the network-based commerce system 10. In one embodiment, the method 100 generates a template suitable for selling a motorcar and the template is then populated with the appropriate reference data identified using the VIN. Further, as reference listing data is retrieved from a reference data source (e.g., a catalogue of VIN data), the integrity of the data provided in the listing is thereby enhanced as the reference data source may be checked and user error is thereby reduced. In certain embodiments, the catalogue of reference listing data is sourced from an appropriate data provider to enhance its accuracy. Accordingly, the data used to populate the template may thus be sourced from an external system. The VIN

catalogue data provider may include VIN data substantially similar to that used by dealers, manufacturers, distributors or the like to list vehicles for sale in a wholesale market.

[00026] Reference numeral 110 (see Figure 5) generally indicates a method, in accordance with the invention, for generating a listing for a motor vehicle using a VIN. In the exemplary network-based commerce system 10, a user may list any item in any one or more of a plurality of categories. However, not all categories may be provided with the automated listing generation functionality. As will be described in more detail below, exemplary categories, in addition to motor vehicles, may include movies, music, and books.

[00027] Returning to Figure 5, as shown at block 112, a check is first conducted to determine if the user selects a valid category which allows automated generation of a proposed listing such as a motor vehicle listing in a motor vehicle category. If a category is selected by the user that does not support automated generation of the proposed listing, then an appropriate message may be communicated to the user. If, however, a supported category is selected (in our present example the motor vehicle category) then, as shown at block 114, the method 110 then receives a listing identifier in the form of a VIN from the user. In certain embodiments, a check may then be conducted to determine whether or not a valid VIN has been entered. Thereafter, the corresponding listing and attribute data (e.g., any data describing the listing) is located (see block 116) and inserted into a predefined template that provides fields for appropriate data. In particular, the template receives the listing and attribute data from the exemplary VIN catalogue and presents the results to a user via a graphic user interface such as a web page (see block 118) including a plurality of check boxes, as described in more detail below. Each check box may correspond to an attribute that the listing may or may not have. Thereafter, the method 110 monitors user selection and de-selection (see block 120) of the check boxes so as to remove attributes that

have been retrieved from the VIN catalogue and populated into the template, and/or add attributes not identified using the VIN catalogue sourced, for example, from a VIN Catalogue data provider.

[00028] As mentioned above, in one embodiment the attributes (e.g., sound system, leather seats, custom paint, heated seats, hard top, etc.) of the listing are identified in the template using a plurality of check boxes. Accordingly, in this embodiment, the check boxes may be automatically checked based on the VIN using the VIN catalogue. However, as mentioned above, any listing identifier may be used to retrieve any attributes or information relating to a proposed listing. It will be appreciated that different templates may be populated dependent upon the nature of the listing and the category in which it is to be listed.

[00029] Reference numeral 130 (see Figure 6) generally indicates a further method, in accordance with the invention, for generating a listing in a network-based commerce system 10 using a plurality of check boxes which are pre-checked based on an identifier entered by the user and listing data or information stored in a database. At block 132, the method 130 provides a proposed listing to the user with check boxes that identify various attributes associated with the listing. Thereafter, as shown at block 134, the check boxes are automatically checked based on appropriate attributes retrieved from a reference listing database based on listing identification data. The identification data may be a title of a movie, compact disc, UPC code or any other identifier that can be used to identify data associated with the listing. Thereafter, as shown at block 136, after a proposed listing has been presented to the user, the user may then select or de-select any one or more of the check boxes, thereby to modify the proposed listing that has been generated in an automated fashion based on the identification data. Once the user has modified the check boxes as required, then

a preview of the proposed listing is presented to the user at block 138 prior to the listing being posted on the network-based commerce system 10.

[00030] Referring in particular to Figure 7, reference numeral 140 generally indicates a method, in accordance to the invention, for a user to post a listing on the network-based commerce system 10 using, for example, the methods 100, 110, and 130. As shown at block 142, the user is first requested to sign in at the network-based commerce system 10 and, thereafter choose the particular format that the user wishes to use for the listing. In one embodiment, the user is provided with an option to select an auction format, an advertisement format, or a fixed price format. Thereafter, as shown at block 146, the user may then select an appropriate category (see block 112 in Figure 5). In one embodiment, a user is provided with the option to select both a first or main category as well as a second category for the listing.

[00031] At block 148, the method provides the user with an option to select a standard or conventional listing procedure, or list using the method 100, in accordance to the invention. If the user selects to list using a conventional listing procedure, the user is then required to populate all fields for the listing manually without automated assistance. However, if the user selects to generate a new listing in an automated fashion using the method 100, then the user at block 148 enters identification data (e.g., the VIN of a vehicle which he or she wishes to list). In one embodiment, a user interface the form of an exemplary web page 150 (see Figure 8) is presented to the user.

[00032] In certain embodiments when the user selects to list a motor vehicle, the network-based commerce system 10 may request a user to identify whether the listing is newer than a predetermined year (e.g., 1990) or older than a predetermined year (e.g., 1989), for example, to accommodate a VIN catalogue that does not include older listings. Further, the web page 150 provides a data entry field 152 for the user to enter the VIN of the vehicle that he or she is

wishing to list. In one embodiment, the method 140 checks the validity of the VIN entered by the user.

[00033] Thereafter, the method 140 monitors activation or clicking of a "Continue" button 154 in order to proceed with the automated listing functionality. If, however, the user chooses to list a vehicle that is older than the predetermined date (e.g., 1989 or older), no VIN is entered and the user may then immediately activate a "Continue" button 156.

[00034] Once the network-based commerce system 10 has received the VIN, and in the event of only a single listing or motor vehicle being found that corresponds to the entered VIN, then the method 140 proceeds directly to a Title and Description operation or block 158. Likewise, if the user enters no VIN and the "Continue" button 156 is activated, then the method 140 also proceeds directly to the Title and Description block 158. If, however, the network-based commerce system 10 locates multiple vehicles associated with the VIN, the method 140 generates a user interface in the form of a web page 160 (see Figure 9) that identifies all the vehicles found in the VIN catalogue associated with the VIN. Each listing located may include an associated "Sell one like this" button 162 and, using the buttons 162, the user may then select a corresponding listing that is most appropriate to his or her proposed listing.

[00035] Returning to Figure 7, the method 140 then automatically generates a title and description page based on attributes or information retrieved from the VIN catalogue and presents a user interface in the form of a web page 164 (see Figure 10) including a plurality of check boxes. The check boxes may, for example, be associated with attributes of the particular listing. For example, as generally indicated by reference numeral 166, the web page may be generated by a template including a heading "Standard Equipment" that shows a plurality of different attributes or characteristics associated with the listing. For example, when the listing is a motor vehicle, the attributes may

include "2 Wheel Drive", "5 Speed", "Rear Spoiler", "Power Seat Driver", "Auto Climate Control", "Cassette", and so on. Each attribute has an associated check box 168 (only a few of which are referenced in Figure 10 of the drawings). In the exemplary web page 164, all the check boxes 168 under Standard Equipment have all been checked by way of example based on the VIN that the user entered into the data entry field 152 (see Figure 8). However, it is to be appreciated that in other circumstances, none of the check boxes 168 or any number of the check boxes 168 may be checked based on the information in the VIN catalogue. The web page 164 also includes an "Optional Equipment" section 170 in which check boxes are provided for optional equipment. For example, a check box may be provided for "After Market Options", "Heated Seats", "CD", "Integrated Phone", "CD Changer", "Power Door Locks", and so on. The check boxes may be checked based on the information included in the VIN catalogue. In one embodiment, the web page 164 includes a data entry field 172 wherein a user may enter the mileage on the vehicle, a drop down menu 174 to enable the user to choose an exterior color, and a drop down menu 176 for choosing an interior color of the vehicle, and so on. Likewise, drop down menus 178 to 190 may be provided for specifying type of wheels, air-conditioning, package, drive train, transmission, spoiler, and power seat respectively.

[00036] In one embodiment, the method 100 automatically generates a title for the listing based on the VIN. In particular, the VIN is used to determine a year, make and model, sub-model/style/trim specified, number of doors, and engine capacity (cylinders and output). Thus, as shown by a user interface in the form of a web page 192 (See Figure 11), a title 194 for the listing may be generated in an automated fashion using information in the VIN catalogue that has been identified by the VIN. For example, in the web page 192, the title "1999 Porsche Boxster S 2-door 6 CYLINDER 2.7 LITER" may be generated in an automated fashion using the VIN 196. Thus, broadly, information or data in a reference database (e.g., the VIN catalogue) may be used (e.g., concatenated) to

generate, for example, a title, a description, or the like. In the present example of listing a motor vehicle, based on the VIN catalogue information, an exemplary listing preview 198 (see Figure 12) may be generated. When the network-based commerce system 10 is an Internet-based system, the listing preview 198 may be in the form of a web page and may include both user entered information as well as information or data that has been populated in an automated fashion using the VIN.

[00037] A vehicle description 200 (see Figure 12) may also be retrieved from the VIN catalogue and populated in the listing preview 198. In one embodiment, the method 140 allows a user to edit the proposed listing prior to posting it on the network-based commerce facility 10. The listing may be edited, for example, using a rich text editor (e.g., a JavaScript text editing tool that allows each description field to have text editing and a dynamic display). An exemplary user interface 204 (see Figure 13) provides the user with an opportunity to review and submit a listing posted on the network-based commerce system 10.

[00038] In certain embodiments of the invention, a user may edit or modify a listing or item after it has been posted on the network-based commerce system 10. For example, in one embodiment of the invention, the system 10 includes a "Revise Your Item" (RYI) function. For example, when the network-based commerce system 10 is a network-based auction system, if there are no bids and more than 12 hours remaining in the auction for the listing, the user or seller may be able to make selected changes. However, when there is either a bid or less than 12 hours remaining, the user or seller may be able to supplement the listings' previous description. If, for example, both a bid and less than 12 hours remain, the seller may in this case make changes not affecting the core description of the listing. Exemplary user interfaces for revising the listing in the form of exemplary web pages are provided in Figures 14 to 18.

[00039] The web page 210 (see Figure 14) allows a user to edit pictures or images and listing or item details. The web page 210 allows features such as highlighting, featured category selection, a motors gallery feature, listing icons, page counters, or the like to be added and/or removed. In a similar fashion, a web page 212 is generated to allow the user to add and/or edit a description of the listing or item, and a web page 214 (see Figure 16) is provided to edit or change check boxes that describe the attributes or features of the listing. In a similar fashion, user interfaces in the form of web pages may be provided that allow the user to revise an item if no bids have been entered or posted for the listing.

[00040] Returning to Figure 7, the method 140 allows a user to add pictures or images at operation or block 220, select shipping and payment methods at operation or block 222, establish warranty details at block 224, and so on.

[00041] As mentioned above, the methods 100, 110, 130 and 140 can be applied to any listing in any network-based commerce system. Further, the identification data that the user enters may differ from one listing to another. For example, when a listing is automatically generated for listing in an exemplary movies category, the listing identification data may be a title of the movie or its UPC code. In one embodiment, a help facility to assist a user in finding the UPC code of the movie may be provided. Further, for example when listing a music CD, the user may enter an artist name, title of the CD and so on. Thus, broadly, the invention allows assisted listing wherein an appropriate template is populated with relevant data pertaining to a proposed listing. In one embodiment, the template includes a plurality of check boxes that are checked in an automated fashion based on reference listing data. It is to be appreciated that the listing generated may include extensive information on the listing or any varying degree of information.

[00042] Referring in particular to Figure 17 of the drawings, reference numeral 250 generally indicates a network-based commerce system in accordance with the invention. The system 250 includes database 252 that includes reference listing data associated with a plurality of listings. In one embodiment, the database 252 is a distributed database, however, in other embodiments it may be a central database. The database 252 is shown to include catalogue data including reference data on movies 254, music 256, games 258, books 260, motor vehicles 262 and so on.

[00043] The system 250 includes a data retrieval module 264, a proposed listing generation module 266, a proposed listing editing module 268, and a proposed listing display module 270. The modules 264 to 270 either individually, or in combination execute the functionality of the above described methods 100, 110, 130 and 140.

[00044] Figure 18 shows a diagrammatic representation of a machine in the exemplary form of a computer system 300 within which a set or sequence of instructions, for causing the machine to perform any one of the methodologies discussed herein, may be executed. In alternative embodiments, the machine may comprise a network router, a network switch, a network bridge, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a cellular telephone, a web appliance, set-top box (STB) or any machine capable of executing a sequence of instructions that specify actions to be taken by that machine.

[00045] The computer system 300 includes a processor 302, a main memory 304 and a static memory 306, which communicate with each other via a bus 308. The computer system 300 may further include a video display unit 310 (e.g., a liquid crystal display (LCD) or a cathode ray tube (CRT)). The computer system 300 also includes an alphanumeric input device 312 (e.g., a keyboard), a cursor control device 314 (e.g., a mouse), a disk drive unit 316, a signal

generation device 318 (e.g., a speaker) and a network interface device 320 to interface the computer system to a network 322.

[00046] The disk drive unit 316 includes a machine-readable medium 324 on which is stored a set of instructions or software 326 embodying any one, or all, of the methodologies described herein. The software 326 is also shown to reside, completely or at least partially, within the main memory 304 and/or within the processor 302. The software 326 may further be transmitted or received via the network interface device 320. For the purposes of this specification, the term "machine-readable medium" shall be taken to include any medium which is capable of storing or encoding a sequence of instructions for execution by the machine and that cause the machine to perform any one of the methodologies of the present invention. The term "machine-readable medium" shall accordingly be taken to include, but not be limited to, solid-state memories, optical and magnetic disks, and carrier wave signals. Further, while the software is shown in Figure 15 to reside within a single device, it will be appreciated that the software 326 could be distributed across multiple machines or storage media, which may include the machine-readable medium.

[00047] Thus, a method and system to generate a listing in a network-based commerce system 10 have been described. Although the invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments, it will be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to these embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.